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1992/06/10

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File 20056

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TO:

OES/NEP: F. McGoldrick

OES/NTS: C. Kessler

S/NP: G. Samore

NEA/RA: L. Ward

EAP/C: F. Hart

rm 4318

INR/SPA: B. Frisa

PM/PRO: B. Cohen

FROM:

Jack Ebetino, OES/NEP

Request your urgent clearance/comment by COB tomorrow 6/11 on the attached update of a Q&A on China-Algeria nuclear cooperation for possible use in an upcoming Congressional appearance by Liz Verville.

647-4752

Room 7828

URGENT

Algeria and China - Nuclear Reactor Cooperation

(E0056H)
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Q. What is the status of the research reactor that Algeria is constructing at Ain Ouserra with Chinese assistance

- A.
- o We believe that the construction of the reactor is essentially complete, fuel loading has begun and reactor startup could occur in the relatively near future.
 - o An IAEA team made an initial visit to the reactor in late January and we understand, did not see anything on that visit which appeared inconsistent with the statements made by Algeria and China in 1991 that the reactor is a 15 megawatt, heavy water moderated, research reactor fuel with low enriched uranium.
 - o The IAEA Board of Governors approved the safeguards agreement for the reactor at its February meeting.
 - o The Government of Algeria provided the IAEA with design information on the reactor, as called for by the safeguards agreement, shortly after the safeguards agreement was approved.
 - o In March, the IAEA carried out its first formal inspection of the reactor which included verification of the design information provided by Algeria.
 - o We have no indication of any problems associated with that inspection.

Drafted by: OES/NEP: JEbetino
6/10/92

Clearances: OES/NEP: FMcGoldrick
OES/NTS: CKessler
S/NP: GSamore
NEA/RA: Lward
EAP/C: FHart
INR/SPA: BFrisa

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